



# U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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## *News Advisory*

For immediate release  
March 27, 2006

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## **Sensenbrenner Statement on Border Security and Immigration Reform**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-Wis.), the author of H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, which the House passed in December by a 239-182 margin, released the following statement:

“Border security and immigration reform is the toughest and most complex government policy issue around, and one that requires a civil, careful, and thoughtful discussion to arrive at a policy that reflects that we are both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. Thus, I am disappointed by the erroneous accusations lodged against the strong House-passed border security bill aimed at preventing illegal immigration that I sponsored.

“First, alien smuggling rings present an enormous problem. These criminal organizations are growing in sophistication, violence, and brutality and committing some of the most heinous acts imaginable. The House bill – at the request of border-area U.S. Attorneys who fight alien smuggling gangs every day – provides new tools for prosecutors to fight these smuggling rings, not the humanitarian and church groups alleged by illegal alien supporters. Targeting alien smuggling gangs is the intent – and the effect – of the House bill.

“I would hope everyone would embrace a good-faith effort to combat alien smuggling gangs rather than engage in fear-mongering that clergy and good Samaritans will be thrown in jail. That’s absolutely false – and beneath the level of dialogue this important issue deserves. I remain optimistic the problem of alien smuggling gangs will be addressed to everyone’s satisfaction as debate continues.

“Second, it is currently a crime to enter the U.S. illegally. Criminal prosecutions for this offense, while not frequent, are focused on the most egregious cases. However, unlawful

presence, or residing here illegally, is not currently a crime in the U.S., as it is in Mexico and many other countries. The House bill would make unlawful presence a crime instead of a civil immigration offense, as it is currently. Due largely to overwhelming Democratic support, the House bill makes unlawful presence a felony, after rejecting my amendment to lower unlawful presence to a misdemeanor. While I was disappointed in this cynical maneuver taken by my Democratic colleagues, I remain committed to making unlawful presence a misdemeanor and producing a strong bill that will prevent illegal immigration and bolster control of our borders in an effective and compassionate way.”

More information on the House anti-smuggling provisions is available at <http://judiciary.house.gov/media/pdfs/iglesiasoped22706.pdf> .

A side-by-side comparison of the House anti-smuggling provisions with current law is available at <http://judiciary.house.gov/media/pdfs/smugglingsidebyside.pdf> .

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